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SUBJECT: EMBASSY'S MEETING WITH UNITED CIVIC FRONT ACTIVIST
LARISSA ARAP

REF: A. MOSCOW 3953

[1](#)B. MOSCOW 4091

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On October 15, Embassy met with Larissa Arap immediately after her return from the United States, in order to discuss problems that she and her family were reportedly facing in Murmansk and the case she has brought against the psychiatric hospital that had held her against her will during the summer, and which will be heard by a Murmansk court on October 17 (reftels). Arap clarified that she is not in danger of being re-institutionalized as a result of the case to be heard on October 17. She provided us with contact information for her and her associates, and the Embassy provided her with contact information for the Consulate in St. Petersburg. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On October 15, Embassy met with Murmansk-based United Civic Front (UCF) activist Larissa Arap immediately after her return to Russia from a trip to the United States. (Arap --reftels-- had been involuntarily institutionalized in Murmansk in July, allegedly because of comments she had made to the media about her treatment during an earlier hospitalization in a psychiatric institution.) Arap, who appeared anxious, was accompanied by Marina Litvinovich, Director of the Aid to Victims of Terror Foundation, and Denis Bilunov, UCF Executive Director. Arap described anonymous threats that she had received before her trip to the United States; some sent as text messages to her mobile phone. Bilunov quoted one such threat, that warned Arap that if she traveled to the United States "you and your family will have problems." Arap said that neither she nor her family had received any threats after she left for the United States.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Arap reported that her daughter had been fired from her job in a public relations firm before Arap's visit to the United States, allegedly because of the publicity generated by Arap's case. Arap said she feared retribution from both the hospital and local authorities upon her return to Murmansk. She feared that the Apetity psychiatric hospital, where she had been institutionalized in July, would again try to institutionalize her. She also said that she feared for her physical safety, although she had received no specific threats of violence. Arap said that many negative stories about her had already been aired on Murmansk television.

[1](#)4. (SBU) On October 17, Arap will appear in the same court that upheld the legality of her July hospitalization in a case that she has brought against the Apetity psychiatric hospital. Contrary to reports circulating after her visit to the United States, Arap insisted that she is not in danger of being reinstitutionalized at this hearing. Arap and Bilunov claimed that they "have absolutely no chance" of winning this case, given that this court already sided with the hospital in an earlier case on the same issue (ref a). The trial was

necessary, however, step in order allow the case to be considered by an appellate court.

¶5. (SBU) Poloff provided contact information to Arap and her colleagues for both the Embassy and the Consulate in St. Petersburg. He asked that they keep the Consulate informed of her circumstances in Murmansk and of the outcome of the case. Embassy recommended that Arap bring any further developments to the attention of the Human Rights Ombudsman's office, since it had worked to secure her release in August (ref b).
Burns